

IT IS CLAIMED AS THE INVENTION:

1. A computer-implemented system for use in collecting data from a user, comprising:

a client computer configurable to connect to a network to obtain over the network form-related data from a server computer system;

wherein a form is displayed based upon the form-related data in a user interface that is generated by the client computer, wherein the form is to collect data from a user;

client-side computer instructions operable on the client computer that visually modifies the form based upon data collected from the user through the form;

wherein the client-side computer instructions are operable to highlight a selection made by the user upon a data item contained within the form;

wherein the client-side computer instructions are operable to provide a visual indication that a data item is complete after the user has provided information required by the data item.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the data item provides a list of options from which the user can select.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein the selection of an option provided in the list is highlighted by at least substantially boldfacing the selection.

4. The system of claim 2, wherein the selection of an option provided in the list is highlighted by colorizing the selection differently from the other options provided in the data item.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the client-side computer instructions generate data indicative of the degree of completion for the data item, wherein the degree of completion is based upon user input with respect to the data item.
6. The system of claim 5, wherein the client-side computer instructions generate a visual indicator for indicating the degree of completion for the data item.
7. The system of claim 6, wherein the visual indicator is a check mark indicator placed in the data item's header.
8. The system of claim 7, wherein the visual indicator provides a differentiation between the completed data item and data items not completed by the user.
9. The system of claim 8, wherein deselection of the data item by the user removes the visual indicator from the data item's header.
10. The system of claim 1, wherein the data item contains a multi-part question, wherein the client-side computer instructions are operable to add a visual completion indicator to the data item after the user has provided all required input to the parts of the multi-part question.
11. The system of claim 1, wherein the data item contains an option which has one or more dependent questions, wherein the client-side computer instructions are operable to add a visual

completion indicator to the form to indicate when the user has supplied a response to a dependent question.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the client-side computer instructions are operable to provide a visual completion indicator to the option after the user has provided all required input to the option's dependent questions.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein deselection with respect to a dependent question removes a visual completion indicator from the dependent question.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein deselection with respect to a dependent question removes a visual completion indicator from the data item.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the visual completion indicator is a check mark.

16. The system of claim 1, wherein the client-side computer instructions generate data indicative of the degree of completion for the form, wherein the degree of completion is based upon user input with respect to data items provided on the form.

17. The system of claim 1, wherein the degree of completion is expressed as a completion percentage.

18. The system of claim 1, wherein the client-side instructions provide a list of currently incomplete data items to the user.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the list is updated as the user completes a data item contained on the form.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein a data item provided in the list is associated with a link, wherein the link provides access to the data item so that the user can view the data item associated with the link.

21. The system of claim 19, wherein the list is updated if the user removes a response to a data item contained on the form.

22. The system of claim 1, wherein the client-side instructions prevent submission of the form while the form is incomplete.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the form submit button is inactive until the form is completed.

24. The system of claim 1, wherein the server computer system handles a request for web page content received over the network from the client computer.

25. The system of claim 1, wherein the network is selected from the group consisting of an intranet network, Internet network, local area network, wide area network, wireless network, network accessible via modems, and combinations thereof.
26. The system of claim 1, wherein the form is a web-based form.
27. The system of claim 1, wherein the web-based form includes a plurality of data items, wherein each data item provides a list of options from which the user can select.
28. The system of claim 1, wherein multiple screen displays are required to display the web-based through a web browser.
29. The system of claim 1, wherein a next screen indicator is required to be activated in order to see a succeeding page of the web-based form.
30. The system of claim 1, wherein the client-side computer instructions visually modify the form with respect to the data item substantially in real-time based upon user input to the data item.
31. The system of claim 1, wherein the client-side computer instructions visually modify the form with respect to the data item in near-real time based upon user input to the data item.

32. The system of claim 1, wherein the client-side computer instructions perform a validation operation based upon the user input to the data item, wherein the validation operation is performed before data acquired through the form is sent from the client computer to a server.

33. The system of claim 32, wherein the server is the server which sent the form-related data to the client computer.

34. The system of claim 32, wherein the server is a server which did not send the form-related data to the client computer.

35. The system of claim 1, wherein the data item is a radio button-based data item.

36. The system of claim 1, wherein the data item is a check box-based data item.

37. The system of claim 1, wherein the data item is a pull down-based data item.

38. A computer-human interface for use in collecting data from a user, wherein the computer-human interface operates on a client computer that contains client-side computer instructions for providing a form completion operation prior to sending data from the form to a remote server, said computer-human interface comprising:

- a form having multiple questions requiring input from the user;

- wherein a first question includes a question stem for indicating a question's text to the user;

- wherein the first question includes a list of options for selection by the user;

- wherein an option selected by the user is to be highlighted on the form by the client-side computer instructions;

- wherein a visual indication is to be provided by the client-side computer instructions that indicates that a user has completed a question on the form;

- wherein selection of an option contained within the list renders visible on the form one or more dependent questions, wherein a dependent question requires input from the user;

- wherein a list of incomplete question is to be updated by the client-side computer instructions as the user completes questions on the form;

- wherein the form's submit mechanism is inactive while the form's questions are incomplete.

39. A computer-implemented method for execution on a client computer for use in collecting data from a user, wherein the client computer contains client-side computer instructions for providing a form completion operation prior to sending data from the form to a remote server, said method comprising the steps of:

- providing a form for display upon a display screen of the client computer;
- wherein the form contains multiple questions requiring input from the user;
- wherein a first question includes a question stem for indicating a question's text to the user;
- wherein the first question includes a list of options for selection by the user;
- highlighting an option on the form that has been selected by the user;
- providing a visual indication to indicate that a user has completed a question on the form;
- making visible one or more dependent questions based upon selection of an option contained within the list, wherein a dependent question requires input from the user;
- updating a list of incomplete questions as the user completes questions on the form.

40. The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of:

- allowing the form's submit mechanism to be inactive while the form's questions are incomplete.

41. Computer software stored on a computer readable media, the computer software comprising program code for carrying out a method according to claim 39.

42. A computer-implemented software program for execution on a client computer for use in collecting data from a user, wherein the client computer contains client-side computer instructions for providing a form completion operation prior to sending data from the form to a remote server, said software program comprising:

computer instructions to provide a form for display upon a display screen of the client computer;

wherein the form contains multiple questions requiring input from the user;

wherein a first question includes a question stem for indicating the question's text to the user;

wherein the first question includes a list of options for selection by the user;

computer instructions to highlight an option on the form that has been selected by the user.

43. The software program of claim 42, wherein the software program comprises multiple software modules, wherein the modules are separately stored.

44. The software program of claim 42, wherein the software program is provided by a server that is delivering the form to the client computer.

45. The software program of claim 42, wherein the software program is provided by a third party server.

46. The software program of claim 42, wherein the software program is stored on the client computer.

47. The software program of claim 42, wherein the computer instructions are human-readable.

48. The software program of claim 42, wherein the computer instructions include computer compiled instructions.

49. A computer-implemented software program for execution on a client computer for use in collecting data from a user, wherein the client computer contains client-side computer instructions for providing a form completion operation prior to sending data from the form to a remote server, said software program comprising:

computer instructions to provide a form for display upon a display screen of the client computer;

wherein the form contains multiple questions requiring input from the user;

wherein a first question includes a question stem for indicating the question's text to the user;

wherein the first question includes a list of options for selection by the user;

computer instructions to provide a visual indication which indicates that a user has completed a question on the form.

50. A computer-implemented software program for execution on a client computer for use in collecting data from a user, wherein the client computer contains client-side computer instructions for providing a form completion operation prior to sending data from the form to a remote server, said software program comprising:

computer instructions to provide a form for display upon a display screen of the client computer;

wherein the form contains multiple questions requiring input from the user;

wherein a first question includes a question stem for indicating the question's text to the user;

wherein the first question includes a list of options for selection by the user;

computer instructions to update a list of incomplete questions as the user completes questions on the form.

51. A computer-implemented software program for execution on a client computer for use in collecting data from a user, wherein the client computer contains client-side computer instructions for providing a form completion operation prior to sending data from the form to a remote server, said software program comprising:

computer instructions to provide a form for display upon a display screen of the client computer;

wherein the form contains multiple questions requiring input from the user;

wherein a first question includes a question stem for indicating the question's text to the user;

wherein the first question includes a list of options for selection by the user;

computer instructions to allow a form's submit mechanism to be inactive while the form's questions are incomplete;

computer instructions to allow a form's submit mechanism to be active when the form's questions are completed.

52. A computer-implemented apparatus for operation on a client computer which assists a user with completion of a web-based form, comprising:

means for receiving computer instructions from a server over a network;

means for displaying a plurality of questions on the client computer's display;

wherein at least one question provides a list of options from which the user can select;

means for highlighting an option selected by the user;

means for de-highlighting an option deselected by the user;

means for providing a visual indicator to indicate to the user that a question has been completed.